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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Russia,  
Syria/Turkey, IIC, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian Territories  
(11/17)

**¶11. Summary:** Syrian papers today reported the visits to Damascus by Russian FM Ivanov and Turkish FM Gul, who are reportedly mediating with Syria to cooperate with the International Investigation Commission. Headlines featured Gul's statement, "Our goal is to protect stability in the region and to prevent a new crisis."

All papers reported a statement by Jamal Seddiq, brother of Zuhair Seddiq, the false witness concerning the Al-Hariri assassination, describing his brother as "a traitor who sold his country for a handful of dollars," and saying that his current wife is a relative of Lebanese Minister Marwan Hamadeh, and of the chief of the Socialist Progressive Party, Walid Junblat, hinting that they were behind his false testimony against Syria.

Papers also featured a statement by Alberto Kanton, an Italian peace advocate and author of "Flying Hawk for Peace;" and Regine Retze, a US peace advocate and member of the Organization of Americans for Justice and Peace, based in Rome, lashing out at President Bush's campaign against Syria and asking him stop holding others responsible for his administration's mistakes.

End of summary.

**¶12. Selected Headlines:**

"President Asad receives a message from President Putin on development of Russian-Syrian relations and discusses with Turkish FM Gul pressure on Syria and cooperation with the International Investigation Commission" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/17)

"Ivanov: We are satisfied with Syria's cooperation with the IIC. Gul: Our goal is to protect stability in the region and to prevent a new crisis" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/17)

"Sultanov [Russian MP]: President Asad has revived hope in the hearts of Arabs and Moslems" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/17)

"Jamal Seddiq [brother of Zuhair Seddiq, the false witness concerning the Al-Hariri assassination]: My brother is a traitor who sold his country for a handful of dollars; his current wife is a relative of Lebanese Minister Marwan Hamadeh, and of the chief of the Socialist Progressive Party, Walid Junblat" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 11/17)

"A womens' sit-in in Al-Rawda square in Damascus condemning the campaign of allegations against Syria" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/17)

"Denunciations of the unjust US campaign against Syria continue: Peace activists Alberto Kanton [Italian] and Regine Retze [American]: The US Administration unleashes lies and deceives US public opinion" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/17)

"The economic crisis in Lebanon on the rise. Demonstrations calling on Al-Saniora to reduce diesel prices or to quit" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/17)

"Nine US marines killed, three Danish soldiers injured in clashes with gunmen in Al-Abidi northern Iraq. A new torture scandal in prisons of Iraqi Interior Ministry raises strong criticism" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/17)

"The US Congress abandons demand to schedule withdrawal of US forces from Iraq but demands that Bush submit periodical reports on his strategy in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/17)

"Under the pressure of resistance and protests by the American people, plans for partial withdrawal from Iraq next summer. The Guardian: Strategy for withdrawing British forces has already been accomplished" (Government-owned

Tishreen, 11/17)

"Clinton: We do not have enough forces to control borders"  
(Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 11/17)

"Occupation forces shell the Gaza Strip with heavy artillery. Sharon refuses to meet Mahmoud Abbas" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/17)

"Netanyahu: Amir Peretz [new leader of Israel's Labor Party] poses a threat to the future of Israel. Vote on dissolving the Knesset is postponed until Monday" (Government-owned, Tishreen, 11/17)

**13. Editorial Block Quotes:**

"Behind the News... The Tumultuous Chorus"

Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote: "Everyone wants to get involved in targeting Syria in the current difficult and complicated circumstances.

Everyone claims to be giving advice and claims to be concerned about Syria's soundness through a fake zeal that reflects the truth about their concordance with the US-Zionist plan for Syria and for the entire region.

"The tumultuous chorus, particularly in Lebanon, embraces whatever Condoleezza Rice peddles and whatever White House employees claim about Syria, and releases deceptive and fabricated [information], even though this chorus is aware that Syria wants to know the truth about the assassination of Al-Hariri more than anyone, so as to bring a halt to the damage that has been inflicted upon it as well as upon Lebanon; The chorus knows that the US wants Syria and not the murderers of Al-Hariri and that the US placed Syria in the defendant's dock even before the Al-Hariri case and even before Resolution 1559. The chorus also knows that its members are mere tools to complete the US plan in Lebanon, in Syria, and in the region.

"Do they ever wonder why the US Administration has not shown the same enthusiasm with regard to the implementation of tens of UN Security Council resolutions against Israel? Or why Al-Hariri [was assassinated] and who had a genuine interest in removing him from the Lebanese arena? Do they ever wonder what the Mosad is doing in Lebanon and Iraq and who deals with its envoys and agents? Do they ever wonder how Lebanon has become an open arena for US Administration employees and how its intelligence men are all over Lebanon? Do they ever wonder about the 'Lebanese shadow government' that is located in Jerusalem at 25 King George Street, whose plan is based on an assassination list of specific Lebanese figures, with Rafiq al-Hariri second on that list?

"This Lebanese chorus lacks the most fundamental sense of national and pan-Arab responsibility. It intends to return Lebanon to the time when it was a staging ground for conspiracies against Syria. Moreover, those who are riding this wave in terms of people who espouse a policy of deception and collusion with the US-Zionist plan cannot torpedo the national equation by becoming associated with this plan because the Lebanese people will sooner or later realize their fake nature...."

"The Investigation"

Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote: "The aim of the investigations into the Al-Hariri assassination is not to find the truth but to serve foreign plans in the region....

"As for the demand that Syrian officials be questioned in Beirut, it is known in the judiciary all over the world that the investigator or the court is the party that must provide the security and the right conditions for the witness to give his testimony, not the other way around. It is also known that the investigator, in his endeavor to find the truth -- and when the truth is his only goal -- must go to any place to find it, not bring places to his bedroom or relaxation area. This is if the truth is the objective...."

"Galloway's Warning"

Ahmad Hamadah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote: "The new plan, of which George Galloway has given warning, to divide the Arab region, similar to the Sykes-Picot agreement early in the 20th century, is no longer secret. The plan has become an open target for US political and academic circles.... While the old plan was kept a secret, the new plan is being promoted and discussed publicly....

"The evidence of this plan is the US occupation of Iraq and the attempt to divide it along ethnic and sectarian lines, the exploitation of the Darfur crisis to impose the American agenda on Sudan, and the major pressures on Syria and Lebanon to offer concessions that serve Israel's interests...."

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